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International Law Documents

Neutrality

Breaking of Diplomatic Relations

War

With Notes

U.S. Naval War College (Editor)

The thoughts and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily of the U.S.

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GERMANY.**WAR ULTIMATA AND DECLARATIONS.***Ultimatum to Russia, July 31, 1914.*

[German White Book.]

Annex 24.—Telegram of the Imperial German Chancellor to the Imperial German Ambassador in St. Petersburg.

JULY 31, 1914.

In spite of still pending mediatory negotiations, and although we ourselves have up to the present moment taken no measures for mobilization, Russia has mobilized her entire army and navy; in other words, mobilized against us also. By these Russian measures we have been obliged, for the safeguarding of the empire, to announce that danger of war threatens us, which does not yet mean mobilization. Mobilization, however, must follow unless Russia ceases within twelve hours all warlike measures against us and Austria-Hungary and gives us definite assurance thereof. Kindly communicate this at once to M. Sazonof and wire hour of its communication to him.

Declaration of War Against Russia, 7.10 p. m., August 1, 1914.¹

[German White Book, see also Russian Orange Paper, No. 76.]

Annex 26.—Telegram of the Imperial German Chancellor to the Imperial German Ambassador in St. Petersburg.

Important!

AUGUST 1, 1914.

In case the Russian Government gives no satisfactory answer to our demand, will your excellency, at 5 o'clock this afternoon (central European time), kindly hand to it the following declaration:

The Imperial Government has endeavored from the beginning of the crisis to bring it to a peaceful solution. In accordance with a wish expressed to him by His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, in cooperation with England, applied himself to the accomplishment of a mediating role toward the cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg, when Russia, without awaiting the outcome, proceeded to mobilize her entire land and naval forces.

Following this threatening measure, occasioned by no military preparation on the part of Germany, the German Empire found itself confronted by a serious and imminent peril. If the Imperial Government had failed to meet this peril, it would have jeopardized

¹ "Note handed in by the ambassador of Germany at St. Petersburg on July 19 (Aug. 1), 1914, at 10 minutes past 7 in the evening." (Russian Orange Paper No. 76.)

the safety and even the existence of Germany. Consequently, the German Government was obliged to address the Government of the Emperor of all the Russias and insist upon the cessation of all these military measures. Russia having refused to accede to this demand, and having manifested by this refusal that her acts were directed against Germany, I have the honor, by order of my Government, to make known to your excellency the following:

His Majesty the Emperor, my august Sovereign, in the name of the Empire, takes up the defiance, and considers himself in a state of war against Russia.

I urgently ask that you wire the hour of arrival of these instructions, and of their carrying out, according to Russian time.

Kindly ask for your passports and hand over protection and business to the American Embassy.

Note Relating to Military Measures in Luxemburg, August 2, 1914.

[French Yellow Book.]

No. 133.—Note handed in by the German Ambassador.

PARIS, August 2, 1914.

The German ambassador has just been instructed, and hastens to inform the minister for foreign affairs, that the military measures taken by Germany in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg do not constitute an act of hostility. They must be considered as purely preventive measures taken for the protection of the railways, which, under the treaties between Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, are under German administration.

VON SCHOEN.

Ultimatum to Belgium August 2, 1914.

[Belgian Gray Book.]

No. 20.—Note presented by Herr von Below Saleske, German Minister at Brussels, to Monsieur Davignon, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Imperial German Legation in Belgium.

BRUSSELS, August 2, 1914.

(Very confidential.)

Reliable information has been received by the German Government to the effect that French forces intend to march on the line of the Meuse by Givet and Namur. This information leaves no doubt as to the intention of France to march through Belgian territory against Germany.

The German Government can not but fear that Belgium, in spite of the utmost good will, will be unable, without assistance, to repel so considerable a French invasion with sufficient prospect of success to afford an adequate guarantee against danger to Ger-

many. It is essential for the self-defense of Germany that she should anticipate any such hostile attack. The German Government would, however, feel the deepest regret if Belgium regarded as an act of hostility against herself the fact that the measures of Germany's opponents force Germany, for her own protection, to enter Belgian territory.

In order to exclude any possibility of misunderstanding the German Government make the following declaration:

1. Germany has in view no act of hostility against Belgium. In the event of Belgium being prepared in the coming war to maintain an attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany the German Government bind themselves, at the conclusion of peace, to guarantee the possessions and independence of the Belgian Kingdom in full.

2. Germany undertakes, under the above-mentioned condition, to evacuate Belgian territory on the conclusion of peace.

3. If Belgium adopts a friendly attitude Germany is prepared, in cooperation with the Belgian authorities, to purchase all necessities for her troops against a cash payment, and to pay an indemnity for any damage that may have been caused by German troops.

4. Should Belgium oppose the German troops, and in particular should she throw difficulties in the way of their march by a resistance of the fortresses on the Meuse, or by destroying railways, roads, tunnels, or other similar works, Germany will, to her regret, be compelled to consider Belgium as an enemy.

In this event Germany can undertake no obligations toward Belgium, but the eventual adjustment of the relations between the two States must be left to the decision of arms.

The German Government, however, entertain the distinct hope that this eventuality will not occur, and that the Belgian Government will know how to take the necessary measures to prevent the occurrence of incidents such as those mentioned. In this case the friendly ties which bind the two neighboring States will grow stronger and more enduring.

Declaration, use of force in Belgium, August 4, 1914.

[Belgian Gray Book.]

No. 27. Herr von Below Saleske, German Minister, to Monsieur Davignon, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Translation. The original is in French.)

BRUSSELS, August 4, 1914 (6 a. m.).

SIR: In accordance with my instructions, I have the honor to inform your Excellency that in consequence of the refusal of the Belgian Government to entertain the well-intentioned proposals

German Declaration of War against France. 103

made to them by the German Government, the latter, to their deep regret, find themselves compelled to take—if necessary by force of arms—those measures of defense already foreshadowed as indispensable, in view of the menace of France.

VON BELOW.

Ultimatum to France, July 31, 1914.

[German White Book.]

Annex 25.—Telegram of the Imperial German Chancellor to the Imperial German Ambassador in Paris.

JULY 31, 1914.

Important!

In spite of our still pending mediatory action, and although we ourselves have adopted no steps toward mobilization, Russia has mobilized her entire army and navy, which means mobilization against us also. Thereupon we declared the existence of a threatening danger of war, which must be followed by mobilization, unless Russia within 12 hours ceases all warlike steps against us and Austria. Mobilization inevitably means war. Kindly ask the French Government whether it will remain neutral in a Russian-German war. Answer must come within 18 hours. Wire at once hour that inquiry is made. Act with the greatest possible dispatch.

Declaration of war against France, 6.45 p. m., August 3, 1914.

[French Yellow Book, Dalloz, Guerre de 1914, 1 : 26.]

No. 147.—Letter handed by the German ambassador to M. René Viviani, president of the council, minister for foreign affairs, during his farewell audience, August 3, 1914, at 6.45 p. m.

M. LE PRÉSIDENT :

The German administrative and military authorities have established a certain number of flagrantly hostile acts committed on German territory by French military aviators. Several of these have openly violated the neutrality of Belgium by flying over the territory of that country; one has attempted to destroy buildings near Wesel; others have been seen in the district of the Eifel; one has thrown bombs on the railway near Karlsruhe and Nuremberg.

I am instructed, and I have the honor to inform your excellency that in the presence of these acts of aggression the German Empire considers itself in a state of war with France in consequence of the acts of this latter power.

At the same time I have the honor to bring to the knowledge of your excellency that the German authorities will detain French mercantile vessels in German ports, but they will release them, if within 48 hours they are assured of complete reciprocity.

My diplomatic mission having thus come to an end, it only remains for me to request your excellency to be good enough to furnish me with my passports, and to take the steps you consider suitable to assure my return to Germany, with the staff of the embassy, as well as with the staff of the Bavarian Legation and of the German consulate general in Paris.

Be good enough, M. le Président, to receive the assurances of my deepest respect.

SCHOEN.

Note breaking diplomatic relations with Japan, August 23, 1914.

[Austro-Hungarian Red Book.]

LXVIII.—Prince Hohenlohe to Count Berchtold.

[Telegram.]

BERLIN, *August 23, 1914.*

The Japanese minister here has been informed by the foreign office that the German Imperial Government had no intention to reply to the Japanese ultimatum. The German Government has instructed its ambassador in Tokyo to leave Japan upon the expiration of the time limit fixed by Japan for noon to-day. Simultaneously the Japanese chargé d'affaires is to be handed his passports.

At noon the chargé d'affaires received his passports; he will leave Berlin to-morrow morning with the staff of the embassy.

Declaration of war against Portugal, 6 p. m., March 9, 1916.¹

[Rev. Gén., Doc. 23: 171.]

Since the outbreak of the war the Portuguese Government, by actions which are in conflict with her neutrality, has supported the enemies of the German Empire. The British troops have been allowed four times to march through Mozambique. The coaling of German ships was forbidden. The extensive sojourn of British war vessels in Portuguese ports, which is also in conflict with the laws of neutrality, was allowed; Great Britain was also permitted to use Madeira as a point d'appui for her fleet. Guns and materials of war were sold to Entente Powers, and even a destroyer was sold to Great Britain.

¹ "The Government of the French Republic has been informed by the minister of Portugal at Paris that on the date of March 9, 1916, at 6 o'clock p. m., the Imperial German Government remitted by its minister at Lisbon to the Government of the Portuguese Republic a note by which it declared that it considered itself in a state of war with Portugal." (*Journal Officiel*, March 13, 1916, p. 2001.)

Austria-Hungary is reported to have declared war upon Portugal March 15, 1916. (Am. Year Book, 1916, p. 815.)

German cables were interrupted, the archives of the imperial vice consul in Mossamedes were seized, and expeditions sent to Africa were described as directed against Germany. At the frontier of German Southwest Africa and Angola the German district commander and two officers and men were tricked into visiting Naulila, and on October 19, 1915, were declared to be under arrest. When they tried to escape arrest they were shot at, and forcibly taken prisoners.

During the course of the war the Portuguese press and Parliament have been more or less openly encouraged by the Portuguese Government to indulge in gross insults on the German people. We repeatedly protested against these incidents in every individual case, and made most serious representations. We held the Portuguese Government responsible for all consequences, but no remedy was afforded us.

The Imperial Government, in forbearing appreciation of Portugal's difficult position, has hitherto avoided taking more serious steps in connection with the attitude of the Portuguese Government. On February 23 the German vessels in Portuguese ports were seized and occupied by the military. On our protest, the Portuguese Government declined to go back from these forcible measures, and tried to justify them by illegal (*gesetzwidrig*) interpretations of existing treaties. These interpretations appeared to the German Government to be empty evasions. It is a fact that the Portuguese Government seized a number of German vessels out of proportion to what was necessary for meeting the shortage of Portugal's tonnage, and that the Government did not attempt even once to come to an understanding with the German shipowners, either directly or through the mediation of the German Government. The whole procedure of the Portuguese Government, therefore, represents a serious violation of existing laws and treaties.

The Portuguese Government by this procedure openly showed that it regards itself as the vassal of Great Britain, which subordinates all other considerations to British interests and wishes. Furthermore, the Portuguese Government effected the seizure of the vessels in a manner in which the intention to provoke Germany can not fail to be seen; the German flag was hauled down in the German vessels, and the Portuguese flag with a war pennon was hoisted, and the flagship of the admiral fired a salute.

The Imperial Government sees itself obliged to draw the necessary conclusions from the attitude of the Portuguese Government. It regards itself from now onward in a state of war with the Portuguese Government.

Statement of declaration of war against Roumania, August 28, 1916.

[Rev. Gén., Doc., 23 : 199, London Times, Aug. 29, 1916, p. 7e.]

After Roumania, as already reported, disgracefully broke treaties concluded with Austria-Hungary and Germany, she declared war Sunday against our ally. The Imperial German minister to Roumania has received instructions to request his passports and to declare to the Roumanian Government that Germany now likewise considers herself at war with Roumania.

MINED AREAS.*Statement in reference to mine laying, August 7, 1914.*

Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State.

[Telegram—Paraphrase.]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

Berlin, August 7, 1914.

Mr. Gerard reports that he is informed by the German foreign office that German ports are strewn with mines and it is requested that timely warning be given shippers against navigating in ports which foreign forces might use as bases.

Note relating to navigation near the German coast, November 14, 1914.

The foreign office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America in reply to the note verbale of 12th instant, F. O. No. 1078, that the following are the material regulations, governing navigation in the German Bay of the North Sea :

1. Steamships are permitted to make for the German coast, to enter or leave the mouths of rivers only from sunrise to sunset, and in clear weather. Ships attempting to point for the coast in the dark, in foggy or thick weather, run the risk of being shot at.

2. All commercial steamers bound for the Eider, Elbe, Weser, and Jade must first point for the Listertief Buoy ; those bound for the Ems should make directly for its mouth.

3. In the interest of the safety of the ships, a pilot is obligatory from the Listertief Buoy.

4. If ships can not pilot, on account of bad weather or for other reasons, they must either anchor or put out to sea again.

The approximate location of the Listertief Buoy is 55° 3 3-4' north, S° 17½' east.

For the rest reference made to issue No. 59 of the " *Nachrichten für Seefahrer* " of 4th instant, pages 1006 and 1007, two copies of which are attached.¹

¹ Not printed.

American shipping interests can obtain any further information from the "Nachrichten für Seefahrer" which is accessible to them.

BERLIN, November 14, 1914.

Notification of mined areas, April 8, 1917.

Minister Egan to the Secretary of State.

[Telegram.]

AMERICAN LEGATION,
Copenhagen, April 8, 1917.

On August 8, 1914, foreign office here published the following notice to mariners: The German Government has issued the following warning to mariners: Vessels are cautioned against approaching places from which attacks from hostile fleets may be expected or harbors and roadsteads from which embarkation of troops may be made, as mines may have been sown in such places.

EGAN.

WAR ZONES.

Proclamation of war zone, February 4, 1915.

PROCLAMATION.

1. The waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland, including the whole English Channel, are hereby declared to be war zone. On and after the 18th of February, 1915, every enemy merchant ship found in the said war zone will be destroyed without its being always possible to avert the danger threatening the crews and passengers on that account.

2. Even neutral ships are exposed to danger in the war zone as, in view of the misuse of neutral flags ordered on January 31 by the British Government and of the accidents of naval war, it can not always be avoided to strike even neutral ships in attacks that are directed at enemy ships.

3. Northward navigation around the Shetland Islands,¹ in the eastern waters of the North Sea, and in a strip of not less than 30 miles width along the Netherland coast is in no danger.

VON POHL,

Chief of the Admiral Staff of the Navy.

BERLIN, February 4, 1915.

¹ NOTE VERBALE.—With reference to its note verbale of the 4th instant the foreign office has the honor to inform the embassy of the United States of America, in order to avoid any doubts as to the northward extent of the war area defined in the proclamation of the chief of the admiralty staff of the same day, that the waters surrounding the Orkneys and

Memorial of the Imperial German Government respecting retaliatory measures rendered necessary by the means employed by England contrary to international law in intercepting neutral maritime trade with Germany, February 4, 1915.

Since the commencement of the present war Great Britain's conduct of commercial warfare against Germany has been a mockery of all the principles of the law of nations. While the British Government have, by several orders, declared that their naval forces should be guided by the stipulations of the Declaration of London they have, in reality, repudiated this declaration in the most essential points, notwithstanding the fact that their own delegates at the Maritime Conference of London acknowledged its acts as forming part of existing international law. The British Government have placed a number of articles on the contraband list which are not at all, or only very indirectly, capable of use in warfare and, consequently, can not be treated as contraband either under the Declaration of London or under the generally acknowledged rules of international law. In addition, they have, in fact obliterated the distinction between absolute and conditional contraband by confiscating all articles of conditional contraband destined for Germany, whatever may be the port where these articles are to be unloaded, and without regard to whether they are destined for uses of war or peace. They have not even hesitated to violate the Declaration of Paris, since their naval forces have captured on neutral ships German property which was not contraband of war. Furthermore, they have gone further than their own orders respecting the Declaration of London and caused numerous German subjects capable of bearing arms to be taken from neutral ships and made prisoners of war. Finally, they have declared the North Sea in its whole extent to be the seat of war, thereby rendering difficult and extremely dangerous, if not impossible, all navigation on the high seas between Scotland and Norway, so that they have, in a way, established a blockade of neutral coasts and ports, which is contrary to the elementary principles of generally accepted international law. Clearly all these measures are part of a plan to strike not only the German military operations, but also the economic system of Germany, and in the end to deliver the whole German people to reduction by famine by intercepting legitimate neutral commerce by methods contrary to international law.

the Shetlands belong to the war area, but that navigation on both sides of the Faroe Isles is not endangered.

The foreign office begs the embassy of the United States of America to be good enough to inform its Government of the above by cable and to notify the Governments of Great Britain, Japan, and Servia accordingly. Berlin, February 28, 1915.

To the EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The neutral powers have in the main acquiesced in the measures of the British Government; in particular they have not been successful in securing the release by the British Government of the German subjects and German merchandise illegally taken from their vessels. To a certain extent they have even contributed toward the execution of the measures adopted by England in defiance of the principle of the freedom of the seas by prohibiting the export and transit of goods destined for peaceable purposes in Germany, thus evidently yielding to pressure by England. The German Government have in vain called the attention of the neutral powers to the fact that Germany must seriously question whether it can any longer adhere to the stipulations of the declaration of London, hitherto strictly observed by it, in case England continues to adhere to its practice, and the neutral powers persist in looking with indulgence upon all these violations of neutrality to the detriment of Germany. Great Britain invokes the vital interest of the British Empire which are at stake in justification of its violations of the law of nations, and the neutral powers appear to be satisfied with theoretical protests, thus actually admitting the vital interests of a belligerent as a sufficient excuse for methods of waging war of whatever description.

The time has come for Germany also to invoke such vital interests. It therefore finds itself under the necessity, to its regret, of taking military measures against England in retaliation of the practice followed by England. Just as England declared the whole North Sea between Scotland and Norway to be comprised within the seat of war, so does Germany now declare the waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland, including the whole English Channel to be comprised within the seat of war, and will prevent by all the military means at its disposal all navigation by the enemy in those waters. To this end it will endeavor to destroy, after February 18 next, any merchant vessels of the enemy which present themselves at the seat of war above indicated, although it may not always be possible to avert the dangers which may menace persons and merchandise. Neutral powers are accordingly forewarned not to continue to entrust their crews, passengers, or merchandise to such vessels. Their attention is furthermore called to the fact that it is of urgency to recommend to their own vessels to steer clear of these waters. It is true that the German Navy has received instructions to abstain from all violence against neutral vessels recognizable as such; but in view of the hazards of war, and of the misuse of the neutral flag ordered by the British Government, it will not always be possible to prevent a neutral vessel from becoming the victim of an attack intended to be directed against a vessel of the enemy. It is expressly declared that navigation in the waters north of the Shetland Islands is outside the danger zone, as well as navigation in the eastern part of the

North Sea and in a zone 30 marine miles wide along the Dutch coast.

The German Government announces this measure at a time permitting enemy and neutral ships to make the necessary arrangements to reach the ports situated at the seat of war. They hope that the neutral powers will accord consideration to the vital interests of Germany equally with those of England, and will on their part assist in keeping their subjects and their goods far from the seat of war; the more so since they likewise have a great interest in seeing the termination at an early day of the war now ravaging.

Notice in reference to war zone, April 22, 1915.

NOTICE.

Travelers intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters, and that travelers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.

IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY.

Declaration of war zone, January 31, 1917.

From February 1, 1917, within barred zones around Great Britain, France, Italy, and in the eastern Mediterranean, as outlined in the following, all sea traffic forthwith will be opposed. Such barred zones are:

In the North Sea, the district around England and France, which is limited by a line 20 nautical miles; the district along the Dutch coast as far as the Terschelling Lightship, the degree of longitude of the Terschelling Lightship to Udsir; a line from there across the point 62° north latitude, 5° longitude, westward along 62° to a point 3 nautical miles south of the south point of the Faroe Islands, from there across the point 62° north, 10° west, to 61° north, 15° west; then 57° north, 20° west, to 47° north, 20° west; further, to 43° north, 15° west; then on degree latitude 43° north to the point 20 nautical miles from Cape Finisterre and 20 nautical miles distance along the Spanish north coast as far as the French frontier.

Concerning the south, in the Mediterranean: For neutral shipping there remains open the sea district west of a line from Pt. de les Paquett to 38° 20' north and 6° east, as well as north and west of a zone 60 sea miles broad along the North African coast, beginning on (2°) west longitude.

In order to connect this sea district with Greece, the zone leads 20 sea miles in width north and east, following line: 38° north and 6° east, 38° north and 10° east, 37° north and 11° 30' east, to 34° north and 11° 30' east to 34° north and 22° 30' east. From there it leads to a zone 20 sea miles broad west of 22° 30' east longitude into Greek territorial waters.

Neutral ships plying within the barred zones do so at their own risk. Although precautions are being taken to spare neutral ships which on February 1 are on the way to ports in the barred zone, during an appropriate delay, yet it is urgently to be advised that they should be warned and directed to other routes by all means available.

Neutral ships lying in ports of the barred zones can with the same safety abandon the barred zones if they sail before February 5 and take the the shortest route into the open district.

The instructions given to the commanders of German submarines provide for a sufficiently long period during which the safety of passengers on unarmed enemy passenger ships is guaranteed. Americans en route to the blockaded zone on enemy freight steamers are not endangered, as the enemy shipping firms can prevent such ships in time from entering the zone.

Traffic of regular American passenger steamers can go on unmolested if—

A. Falmouth is taken as the port of destination; and if,

B. On the going and return journey the Scilly Islands, as well as the point 50° north, 20° west, be steered on. Along this route no German mines will be laid.

C. If steamers on this journey bear the following special signals, which only they will be permitted to display in American ports: A coating of paint on the ship's hull and the superstructure in vertical stripes 3 meters broad, alternating white and red; on every mast a large flag checkered white and red, on the stern the American national flag; during darkness the national flag and the coat of paint to be as easily recognizable as possible from a distance; and the ships must be completely and brightly illuminated.

D. If only one steamer runs each week in each direction arriving at Falmouth on Sundays, leaving Falmouth on Wednesdays.

E. If guaranties and assurances are given by the American Government that these steamers carry no contraband (according to the German list of contraband).

Memorandum relating to war zone declaration January 31, 1917.

After bluntly refusing Germany's peace offer, the entente powers stated in their note addressed to the American Government that they are determined to continue the war in order to deprive Germany of German Provinces in the west and east, to destroy Austria-Hungary, and to annihilate Turkey. In waging war with such aims the entente allies are violating all rules of international law,

as they prevent the legitimate trade of neutrals with the central powers, and of the neutrals among themselves.

Germany has so far not made unrestricted use of the weapon which she possesses in her submarines. Since the entente powers, however, have made it impossible to come to an understanding based upon equality of rights of all nations, as proposed by the central powers, and have instead declared only such a peace to be possible which shall be dictated by the entente allies and shall result in the destruction and the humiliation of the central powers, Germany is unable further to forego the full use of her submarines.

The Imperial Government, therefore, does not doubt that the Government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the entente allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the central powers, and that the Government of the United States will further realize that the now openly disclosed intentions of the entente allies gives back to Germany the freedom of action which she reserved in her note addressed to the Government of the United States on May 4, 1916.

Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by forcibly preventing, after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France, Italy, and in the eastern Mediterranean all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to England and from and to France, etc. All ships met within that zone will be sunk.

The Imperial Government is confident that this measure will result in a speedy termination of the war and in the restoration of peace, which the Government of the United States has so much at heart. Like the Government of the United States, Germany and her allies had hoped to reach this goal by negotiations. Now that the war, through the fault of Germany's enemies, has to be continued, the Imperial Government feels sure that the Government of the United States will understand the necessity of adopting such measures as are destined to bring about a speedy end of the horrible and useless bloodshed.

The Imperial Government hopes all the more for such an understanding of her position, as the neutrals have under the pressure of the entente powers suffered great losses, being forced by them either to give up their entire trade or to limit it according to conditions arbitrarily determined by Germany's enemies in violation of international law.

Note relating to war zone declaration, January 31, 1917.

Count Bernstorff, German Ambassador, to Mr. Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 31, 1917.*

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE:

Your excellency was good enough to transmit to the Imperial Government a copy of the message which the President of the

United States of America addressed to the Senate on the 22d instant. The Imperial Government has given it the earnest consideration which the President's statements deserve, inspired, as they are, by a deep sentiment of responsibility.

It is highly gratifying to the Imperial Government to ascertain that the main tendencies of this important statement correspond largely to the desires and principles professed by Germany. These principles especially include self-government and equality of rights for all nations. Germany would be sincerely glad if in recognition of this principle countries like Ireland and India, which do not enjoy the benefits of political independence, should now obtain their freedom.

The German people also repudiate all alliances which serve to force the countries into a competition for might and to involve them in a net of selfish intrigues. On the other hand, Germany will gladly cooperate in all efforts to prevent future wars.

The freedom of the seas, being a preliminary condition of the free existence of nations and the peaceful intercourse between them, as well as the open door for the commerce of all nations, has always formed part of the leading principles of Germany's political program. All the more the Imperial Government regrets that the attitude of her enemies, who are so entirely opposed to peace, makes it impossible for the world at present to bring about the realization of these lofty ideals.

Germany and her allies were ready to enter now into a discussion of peace, and had set down as basis the guarantee of existence, honor, and free development of their peoples. Their aims, as has been expressly stated in the note of December 12, 1916, were not directed toward the destruction or annihilation of their enemies and were, according to their conviction, perfectly compatible with the rights of the other nations. As to Belgium, for which such warm and cordial sympathy is felt in the United States, the chancellor had declared only a few weeks previously that its annexation had never formed part of Germany's intentions. The peace to be signed with Belgium was to provide for such conditions in that country, with which Germany desires to maintain friendly neighborly relations, that Belgium should not be used again by Germany's enemies for the purpose of instigating continuous hostile intrigues. Such precautionary measures are all the more necessary, as Germany's enemies have repeatedly stated, not only in speeches delivered by their leading men, but also in the statutes of the Economical Conference in Paris, that it is their intention not to treat Germany as an equal, even after peace has been restored, but to continue their hostile attitude, and especially to wage a systematical economic war against her.

The attempt of the four allied powers to bring about peace has failed, owing to the lust of conquest of their enemies, who desired

to dictate the conditions of peace. Under the pretense of following the principle of nationality our enemies have disclosed their real aims in this way, viz: To dismember and dishonor Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. To the wish of reconciliation they oppose the will of destruction. They desire a fight to the bitter end.

A new situation has thus been created which forces Germany to new decisions. Since two years and a half England is using her naval power for a criminal attempt to force Germany into submission by starvation. In brutal contempt of international law the group of powers led by England does not only curtail the legitimate trade of their opponents, but they also, by ruthless pressure, compel neutral countries either to altogether forego every trade not agreeable to the entente powers or to limit it according to their arbitrary decrees.

The American Government knows the steps which have been taken to cause England and her allies to return to the rules of international law and to respect the freedom of the seas. The English Government, however, insists upon continuing its war of starvation, which does not at all affect the military power of its opponents, but compels women and children, the sick and the aged, to suffer for their country pains and privations which endanger the vitality of the nation. Thus British tyranny mercilessly increases the sufferings of the world, indifferent to the laws of humanity, indifferent to the protests of the neutrals whom they severely harm, indifferent even to the silent longing for peace among England's own allies. Each day of the terrible struggle causes new destruction, new sufferings. Each day shortening the war will, on both sides, preserve the lives of thousands of brave soldiers and be a benefit to mankind.

The Imperial Government could not justify before its own conscience, before the German people, and before history the neglect of any means destined to bring about the end of the war. Like the President of the United States, the Imperial Government had hoped to reach this goal by negotiations. After the attempts to come to an understanding with the entente powers have been answered by the latter with the announcement of an intensified continuation of the war, the Imperial Government—in order to serve the welfare of mankind in a higher sense and not to wrong its own people—is now compelled to continue the fight for existence, again forced upon it, with the full employment of all the weapons which are at its disposal.

Sincerely trusting that the people and the Government of the United States will understand the motives for this decision and its necessity, the Imperial Government hopes that the United States may view the new situation from the lofty heights of impartiality, and assist, on their part, to prevent further misery and unavoidable sacrifice of human life.

Inclosing two memoranda regarding the details of the contemplated military measures at sea, I remain, etc.,

J. BERNSTORFF.

Notification of war zone extension, March 23, 1917.

Foreign Governments have been informed that in future in the district of the northern Arctic Ocean east of the twenty-fourth degree of eastern longitude and south of the seventy-fifth degree of northern latitude, with the exception of Norwegian territorial waters, all ocean traffic forthwith will be opposed with all arms.

Neutral ships plying this district do so at their own risk, but provision is made that neutral ships that are already on voyage to ports in this barred zone or that desire to leave such ports will not be attacked without special warning until April 5.

Proclamation of war zone, November 22, 1917.¹

The hostile Governments are endeavoring by the intensification of the hunger blockade against neutral countries to force out to sea neutral cargo space, which is keeping in port, and to press

¹ Since the above was put in type the following has been published:

The Swiss Legation in Washington has transmitted to the Department of State the following communication from the German Government:

"Supplement to the German declaration of Jan. 31, 1917, concerning the blockaded zone.

"On and after Jan. 11, 1918, a new zone of sea is declared blockaded around the enemy point of support in Cape Verde Islands and Dakar and the adjoining coasts. That zone is bounded as follows:

"From the Cape Palmas lighthouse toward the point 10° 0' N., 29° 30' W., to the point 17° 0' N., 29° 30' W., to the point 20° 30' N., to the point 25° 30' W.; there the line follows the parallel 20° 30' latitude northeastwardly as far as the point where that parallel strikes the western coast of Africa.

"On the same date the zone blockaded around the Azores will be extended eastward as far as Madeira Island, which is used by our enemies as a point of support, so that the zone will be bounded as follows: From point 44° 0' N., 34° 0' W., to point 42° 30' N., 37° 0' W., to the point 37° 0' N., 37° 0' W., to point 30° 0' N., 27° 0' W., to the point 30° 0' N., 17° 0' W., to the point 34° 0' N., 12° 0' W., to the point 36° 45' N., 12° 0' W., and back to the starting point.

"Neutral vessels which at the time of publication of this declaration happen to be in ports within the new blockaded zone may yet leave those ports without coming under the military measures ordered for that zone if they can leave before or on Jan. 18, 1918, and take the shortest route to the free regions. Sufficient time has been allowed so that neutral vessels that may enter the new blockaded zone without having a knowledge of the present declaration or unable to gain such knowledge be spared.

"It is earnestly recommended that neutral shipping be cautioned and warned off the blockade zone."

Berlin, Jan. 5, 1918. (U. S. Official Bulletin, No. 221, p. 4.)

it into their service. As hostile shipping and shipping sailing in hostile interest are being supplemented by violent measures, the German Government in its struggle against Great Britain's domination of violence, which tramples under foot all rights, especially those of smaller nations, finds itself obliged to extend the field of operation of its submarines.

The zone is outlined thus:

From 39° north latitude and 17° west longitude to 44° north latitude and 27° 45' west longitude to 44° north latitude and 34° west longitude, to 42° 30' north latitude and 37° west longitude, to 57° north latitude and 37° west longitude, to 30° north latitude and 26° west longitude, to 34° north latitude and 20° west longitude, and thence back to the starting point.

GREAT BRITAIN.

WAR ULTIMATA AND DECLARATIONS.

Ultimatum to Germany, August 4, 1914.

[British White Paper.]

No. 159.—Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

[Telegraphic.]

LONDON, FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 4, 1914.*

We hear that Germany has addressed note to Belgian minister for foreign affairs stating that German Government will be compelled to carry out, if necessary by force of arms, the measures considered indispensable.

We are also informed that Belgian territory has been violated at Gemmenich.

In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Germany declined to give the same assurance respecting Belgium as France gave last week in reply to our request made simultaneously at Berlin and Paris, we must repeat that request, and ask that a satisfactory reply to it and to my telegram of this morning¹ be received here by 12 o'clock to-night. If not, you are instructed to

¹ No. 153.—Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

[Telegraphic.]

LONDON, FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 4, 1914.*

The King of the Belgians has made an appeal to His Majesty the King for diplomatic intervention on behalf of Belgium in the following terms:

"Remembering the numerous proofs of Your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of Your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium."

His Majesty's Government are also informed that the German Government has delivered to the Belgian Government a note proposing friendly